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ABSTRACT

The difficulties faced by ethnic groups today are related not only to widespread unfamiliarity with the cultural evolution of specific groups, but to an inadequate popular understanding of the processes of cultural evolution itself, i.e., man's prehistory. Archeology can make significant contributions in this regard by counteracting the deleterious contemporary effects of the mythologized understandings of the human past. There are at least 6 different deleterious "popular mythologies" about the evolutionary process. All of these affect minority relationships to some extent. All might in time be corrected entirely, given a sufficient widespread understanding of the various artifactual and theoretical findings of nomothetically-oriented archeological research. None of these 6 assumptions is borne out by the present-day synthesis of archeological findings. Principally, the science of prehistory advocated in this paper can demonstrate: 1) the inadequacy of single-factor explanations of sociocultural evolution, 2) the emergence of high-energy complex societies, 3) the questionable utility of technological complexity as a criterion of cultural achievement, 4) the fallacy of assuming that a society which has undergone changes while in close contiguity with other cultures has done so as a result of its own indigenous innovations and 5) the converse of the previous fallacy. The prehistoric record indicates that the present biological and cultural diversity of humankind is a recent evolutionary development. (Author/AM)

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ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT: POPULAR MYTHOLOGY AND ARCHEOLOGICAL REALITIES[1]

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ABSTRACT

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The difficulties faced by ethnic groups today are related not only to widespread unfamiliarity with the cultural evolution of specific groups, but to an inadequate popular understanding of the processes of cultural evolution itself. Archeology can make significant contributions in this regard by counteracting the deleterious contemporary effects of mythologized understandings of the human past. Principally, the science of prehistory can demonstrate = (1) the inadequacy of single-factor explanations of sociocultural evolution, (2) the extremely recent emergence of high-energy, complex societies, (3) the questionable utility of technological complexity as a criterion of cultural achievement, (4) the fallacy of assuming that a society which has undergone changes while in close contiguity with other cultures has done so exclusively as a result of its own indigenous innovations, and (5) the converse fallacy of assuming that a society which has changed very slowly while under conditions of comparative isolation is characterized by an indigenous lack of an innovative capacity. Finally, the prehistoric record consistently indicates that the present biological and cultural diversity of humankind is a recent evolutionary development, and that the vast majority of our cultural evolutionary heritage was the achievement of human populations that were characterized by a far greater degree of biocultural homogeneity than that

of their modern evolutionary descendants. A wider understanding of these diachronic perspectives could possibly contribute to a significant improvement in popular attitudes toward the various cultural groups that today exist as minorities within the complex societies of the contemporary world.

"We moderns would say" (Eliade once wrote) "that myth abolishes history. But...the majority of myths...themselves constitute an exemplar history for the human society in which they have been preserved, and for the world that society lives in...This interest survived (he continues) even in the first historians of the ancient world, for to them the 'past' had meaning only in so far as it was an example to be imitated, and consequently formed the summa of the learning of all mankind." (Eliade 1963: 430-431).

I am concerned here, then, with history as a human creation, and with the function of history and of myth. Dating at least from the pioneering efforts of Malinowski, cultural anthropologists have consistently recognized that all human societies on every level of technological complexity have attempted in some fashion to understand themselves within an historical perspective.[1] At all times, everywhere, these diachronic understandings have provided human beings with a sense of origin and process; their global ubiquity is testimony to the fact that the past, as edited and selected by humans, is living and functioning in the present, that the past, as Faulkner said, is never past. While these understandings are "history" or "fact" in high-energy societies with a state level of organization, and "mythology" or "oral tradition" in the preliterate cultural systems of the world, they all share the adaptive significance of providing explanations for contemporary sociocultural conditions; they are "charters of reality" for the orientation of human life in the here and now. (Malinowski in Malefijt 1968: 179).

That a sense of earlier achievements conceptualized as significant and good in the indigenous value system of the culture should amount to a universal human desideratum is a fact that has always been thrown into high relief by contemporary cultural groups encapsulated by larger and

more powerful societies. These minorities are seeking not only to preserve intact at least some remnants of their ways of life, but are attempting as well to transmit (or to discover) the threads of their sociocultural evolution. It is within this special contemporary context that archeology can contribute information of value. The science can provide not only an empirically-based repertoire of data concerning the development of specific culture groups, but also (and I think, more importantly), can help facilitate a demythologizing process regarding both specific and general cultural evolution to overcome the large-scale misunderstandings that still are pervasive within the majority context of highly-technologized societies.

It is my feeling that the problems which are faced by contemporary ethnic groups, while undoubtedly due to a multiplicity of factors, are at least in part the function of an inadequate knowledge of the evolutionary sequences of particular societies and even more fundamentally, are the outgrowth of a chronologically circumscribed, limited understanding of the general processes of the cultural evolution of all humanity. Specifically, I believe that there exist today at least six different deleterious "popular mythologies" involving the evolutionary process. All of these affect minority relationships to some extent and all might in time be corrected entirely, given a sufficiently widespread understanding of the various findings, artifactual and theoretical, of nomothetically-oriented archeological research. The "popular mythologies" include: 1) monistic explanations for cultural evolutionary processes, 2) the assumption of an extensive timespan during which the human species has lived under conditions of urban, settled life, 3) the value of technology as a reliable index of sociocultural achievement, 4) the assumption that a society which has undergone rapid change has done so

as a result of its own indigenous creativity, 5) the converse assumption that a society which has changed very slowly through time has undergone an extinguishing of the capacity for experiment and innovation, and finally, 6) the assumption that the present biological and cultural diversity of humankind is an extremely ancient phenomenon, and extends far back into the prehistoric record of the species. None of these assumptions, I hope to show, is borne out by the present-day synthesis of archeological findings, and all affect to varying extends the dimensions of the minority context within the contemporary world.

It has until recently been a common practice among both professional anthropologists and laymen to attempt to explain the dynamics of socio-cultural systems in terms of some single, isolated factor. Most pernicious of these were certainly the "explanations" that involved some variation of biological reductionism. In the nineteenth century age of British and American imperialism, such explanations were stock-in-trade. As recently as the turn of the century, the president of the American Anthropological Association observed that "the savage stands strikingly close to sub-human species in every aspect of mentality as well as in bodily habits and bodily structure." (McGee in Harris 1968: 255; Harris 1968: 251, 292, 297-298). That this view of life could continue well into the present century and tragically coalesce with totalitarian forms of government (in spite of the continued findings of archeological and ethnographic research) is pathologic testimony in itself to the contemporary need to popularize an archeological perspective.

The difficulty with biological reductionism, of course, apart from its tragic social consequences, is the limited understanding that it represents of the biobehavioral information content of the human

evolutionary record. The problem is simply that the indirect evidence bearing upon the subject (i.e. the human fossil and artifactual remains) does not tend to support such a view, while direct evidence of behaviorally significant somatic variations (e.g. inter-population neurological and endocrinological variations) is never significantly preserved within the evolutionary record.

It seems worthwhile nevertheless to consider the human occupational debris and the bearing that it has upon the matter, utilising pre-Columbian America as an example. We know from the artifactual materials that beginning at approximately 30,000 years before present both the Americas were undergoing occupation by band-level populations of Homo sapiens sapiens, our own immediate precursors. (Fagan 1977: 141; Smith 1976: 223-232). While it is possible that subsequent culture contact occured intermittently between Old World and New, for the most part such acculturation appears to have been rare, so that the prehistoric Americas essentially provide an isolated continental breeding population or what is sometimes called a geographic race. (Maggers 1975; Buettner-Janusch 1973: 491). When one considers, however, the archeological record of this Amerindian breeding unit, one is struck immediately by its considerable range of sociocultural complexity. Paradigmatic examples might certainly include (at one extreme) the Great Basin Shoshone of southwestern United States. This was a collection of culturally and linguistically related societies subsisting upon deer, antelope, squirrels, various rodents, and a wide variety of plant foods. Nomadic hunters and gatherers with no permanent shelters, minimal material culture, and a band level of social organization, they were characterized by a way of life which apparently had changed very little from the original dessication of the American southwest until nineteenth century culture

contact with white industrialized society. (Fagan 1977: 153-155; Spencer, Jennings, et. al. 1965: 273-282).

In dramatic contrast with the Shoshone are the agriculturally-based urban complexes of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and the Peruvian Andes. A good twelve centuries before the arrival of the Spanish, (when our own English-speaking ancestors were Neolithic-level peasant farmers) the Maya of Yucatan peninsula had already achieved a state level of political organization which included a religiously-based hierarchy of political power, massive pyramidal-style architecture, a warrior class, an extensive network of commercial alliances, a developed knowledge of astronomy, and an accuracy of astronomical prediction that had not existed in Western Europe since the megalithic society of Stonehenge and would not exist there again until the time of Galileo and Tycho Brahe. (Fagan 1977: 338-350).

Between these contemporaneous extremes, there existed in the New World an entire spectrum of sociocultural complexity. To explain such variation in terms of biological differences, it would be necessary to postulate a series of breeding populations with sharply defined reproductive boundaries for the various organizational levels of the cultural spectrum. The other alternative (the one best supported by studies of the reproductive behavior of contemporary human populations) is the assumption that pre-Columbian Amerindian groups had extensive biological contact with one another, and were a continent-wide reproductive community. (Beuttner-Janusch 1973: 490-491; Weiss and Mann 1975: 300-301).

The biological reductionist, to explain cultural achievements such as those of the Yucatan Maya, must assume not only a "superior" genetic endowment for that population but must additionally postulate that their achievements were made possible by an arrest of extensive biological

contact (or gene flow) with less endowed populations, that their discrete reproductive boundaries were maintained throughout the period of Maya sociocultural complexity and state-level organization (that is, during a period of some five to six hundred years), that genetic mutations which might prove deleterious to the isolated gene pool were either negligible or non-existant, and that the rapid rate of Maya collapse in the latter part of the eighth century A.D. was due to a sudden resumption of reproductive contact with other populations, to a dramatic change in the rate of culturally deleterious mutations, or possibly to both of these factors. The assumptions, of course, are all biological nonsense and are not in the least supported by studies of the reproductive behavior of contemporary human populations. (Weiss and Mann 1975: 300-301; Dobshansky 1962: 47-50).

Due to pitfalls such as these, the concept of biological reductionism has, among social scientists at least, for decades been recognized as fallacious. It might seem indeed that such evolutionary concepts as clinal variation, mutation and flow, as well as the understanding that no human somatic or behavioral characteristic is ever due to genetic action alone, but to the interaction of the genotype with the physical and cultural environments are now so much an established part of popular and professional thinking that this brief excursion into the New World cultural evolutionary record is something of an intellectual anachronism.

And yet, one need only consider some of the biocultural theorists of very recent times and the popular enthusiasm with which their work was received to realize that a biological and evolutionary naivete still characterizes much of the urbanized world, and that a possible proclivity still exists for the biological reductionist point of view. In the writings of Arthur Jensen one encounters confusion over genetic "heritability", while in Konrad Lorenz and Robert Ardrey, there is a revival of

the concept of human "instincts", a model which (as Robert Hinde has shown) cannot explain the behavior of a human being, or for that matter, the behavior of an earthworm. This latter recently popular concept is unfortunately serving as a kind of blanket rubric for an entire nexus of neurological, endocrinological and other biological factors which interact with the organism's environment and are systematically more complex in the higher levels of biological organization within the animal kingdom. (Hinde 1974: 23-29; Ardrey 1961; Lorenz in Ardrey 1966: 278-279; Weiss and Mann 1975: 391-393).

In the present world then, as much as ever, there exists a striking need for a wider, more sophisticated understanding of the processes of human evolution. Mieux prevenir que guerir, said the French physicians of the nineteenth century: it is better to prevent than to cure. A similar logic is involved in the popularization of the archeological perspective. In order to prevent a dangerous resurgence of the biological reductionism that was only a matter of decades ago, it is necessary to bring about a greater familiarity with the specific events of sociocultural evolution and the inadequacy of human biology alone to explain in any intelligible fashion the variety and the dynamism of the past.

Other styles of monistic explanation have, of course, been periodically invoked. Outstanding among these have been the appeals to climatic, technological, or environmental factors as the prime movers in human cultural evolution. While these are generally not as negative in their social effects as the concept of biological reductionism, they are nonetheless conducive to an oversimplified understanding of cultural process, a conceptual limitation that can ultimately produce unrealistic expectations for directed cultural change in the present world.

Typical of such orientations is the view that complex civilizations

are the result of particular combinations of temperature, barometric pressure, sunlight, and similar climatological factors. The tropical regions of central Africa are thus envisioned as being overly ennervating for such developments, while regions such as northeastern United States are believed to present the optimum physical matrix for complex culture. (Penniman 1965: 251; Dubos 1965: 41; Barnett 1953: 23). The limitations of models such as these and the Procrustean fit that they have with the archeological data have long been recognized by prehistorians. It is not simply the environment alone, but the environment and the culture, articulated together in an ecological, open system that is the basic unit of process in culture change. (Smith 1977: 37-40, 496). It was an insufficient awareness of this principle that produced the European colonial misconception that the monumental ruins they encountered in central Africa were not possibly the remnants of an indigenously generated civilization. Necessarily they postulated extensive migrations from outside the continent to account for the massive stone structures of Zimbabwe, an explanatory device that had also been used for the Mississippian temple mound structures of the North American Indians. (Fagan 1977: 139; Jennings 1968: 44-45; Ceram 1971: 236-257). Now that we are more familiar with the details of African prehistory and are aware of such urban adaptations as the eleventh century A.D. kingdom of Ghana with its extensive gold, ivory and slave trade networks and its army of 200,000 men or, for that matter, with the fourteenth century A.D. central African kingdom of Karanga with its stone Acropolis architecture and cloth, china, glass and porcelain trade, we are far less prone to the earlier caricatured views of the sociocultural possibilities of the various tropical biomes of the world. (Fagan 1977: 273-284).

It simply needs, then, to be more widely recognized that change

within any cultural system, prehistoric or modern, is a multicausal process in which deviation-amplifications can occur in any set of variables, and at any point within the system. (Smith 1977: 37-40; 496; Maruyana 1964). Reductionist thinking is only conducive to oversimplified diachronic understandings, and to unrealistic expectations with regard to minority group possibilities within the contemporary world.

The sociopolitical context within which these possibilities exist is, of course, highly varied from one region of the world to another, both with regard to the degree of repression and the extend of cross-cultural understanding. It is particularly in those areas of the world where acculturation is occuring between industrialized societies and groups that still exist on a lower energy level of technological adaptation that the conditions of cultural contact can be particularly repressive and severe. The New Zealand Maori encounter employment and housing discrimination, blacks throughout the Republic of South Africa encounter a nation-wide apartheid policy, and thousands of hunters and gatherers in the Amazon Basin encounter disease, displacement, and genocidal death in the wake of the Trans-Amazonian Highway. (Metge 1964: 257-258; DuToit 1972; Stearman 1976).

This contemporary crisis, as Zbigniew Brzezinski has shown, is not at all understandable as McLuhan's "global village" with its implied homogeneity of traditions and expectations, but is much better conceptualized as a "global city": a massive aggregation of disparate populations in which differences are thrown into high relief. In addition to the multifaceted political, economic, and educational strategies that must be undertaken to meet the problem, there is also the necessity for a greater awareness among the members of the majority societies of the extremely recent development and spread of the literate, high-energy civilizations.

A telling example is Prime Minister Ian Smith, who in the days of the Rhodesian riots assured his numerical-minority white constituency that the demonstrations had played fully into the hands of his regime and for that matter had justified its existence. By their actions, he had reasoned, the demonstrators had shown that they were not yet ready to receive the benefits of participation in a more "civilized" society. (Brzezinski 1970: 19; Ian Smith in CBS News broadcast, January 21, 1972).

Such cultural elitism, in Smith or in Kipling, has traditionally flourished in the absence of a temporal perspective. But the virtual information explosion that has characterized archeology in the last twenty years has provided ample evidence of the comparatively recent development of "civilized" life, and has indicated as well how quickly any human society can shift from technologically-primitive, to civilized, and back again. If the word "civilization" can minimally signify a surplus-energy society with a state level of political organization and a proliferation of interdependent, full-time specialized activities, then civilization, at its very earliest, has accounted for slightly less than one one-thousandth of the chronological span of human existence. (Smith 1976: 372; Fagan 1977: 254). If we wish to be more flexible and define it instead as the condition of an energy surplus and settled life, then civilization would still constitute only about one five-hundredth of the cultural evolutionary record. (Smith 1977: 180-181). Civilization is a single page attached to an infinite calendar; beyond that page we are all hunters and gatherers, a fact that should be recognized today.

Beyond this, the fact that civilizations, even within such an instantaneous span of time, have undergone dramatic transformations and regressions, serves as a reminder not only that there are systemically simpler societies in the world today that are descended from complex,

urbanized states, but also reminds us of the possible ephemerality of our own achievements. Such a perspective is particularly relevant to the contemporary myth that technological complexity is a realiable criterion of sociocultural accomplishment. Surrounded by a highly sophisticated industrialized technology in which all of us participate (although few of us understand very much about it) and being enculturated into a society that sanctions technological innovation, it is easy for us to understand the attitude of the American administrators in Peru who measured the "progress" of each peasant village by taking censuses of the numbers of working toilets. (Hardman-de-Bautista: 1970).

What is central to these and other similar evaluations is the focus upon complexity with an insufficient regard for adaptation. The Indus Valley urbanized states of the second millenium B.C. were characterized by aqueduct drainage systems, sacred pools, tiled baths, and a level of hygiene that would not be seen in the West until Greco-Roman times, and not again until Pasteur and the development of the germ theory of disease. Their technological accomplishments were in close parallel and included extensive irrigation systems, fired-brick architecture, a developed metallurgy, and harbors with canals, sluice gates and locks to adjust the amount of water for the larger ships. The whole edifice, unfortunately, was constructed upon a technological base of full-scale environmental deterioration. The progressive deforestation of the surrounding foothills to provide fuel for the fired-brick architecture led ultimately to erosion and the silting of the irrigation system. Inevitably, a new irrigation system was required, leading to more deforestation, erosion, and ruin, until, caught in a spiral of expansion and destruction, Indus civilization eventually collapsed---invaded by a pastoral society. (Fagan 1977: 289; Wheeler 1968).

Charles Darwin reminded himself in his notes never to use the words "higher" and "lower", that adaptation is more crucial than complexity. The pattern of Indus (and other similar prehistoric societies) provides a diachronic illustration for the contemporary world of the Faustian dangers intrinsically a part of the lack of understanding of Darwin's view. It is not technological complexity or simplicity that should guide contemporary attitudes toward a culture group's achievements, but rather the evolutionary efficiency with which the technological system is articulated with the matrix of the natural world. (Mayr in Kennedy 1977: 15).

Such an evolutionary perspective almost tautologically involves the problematic matter of rates of change. In assessments of human cultural evolution, the question has developed a direct significance for contemporary attitudes toward the cultural minorities of the world. It seems readily apparent to any Western observer that there are certain societies which are constantly changing, while others seen to be anachronistic replicas of Neolithic peasantry or Upper Paleolithic nomadic hunters. The implication would seem to be that there has always existed among human societies a differential capacity for sociocultural innovation. This idea, in our time, has taken the form of a near dichotomy. It has been assumed that societies which have undergone rapid change have done so as the result of indigenous creativity and, conversely, that societies which have changed very slowly have a limited capacity for innovation.

Not surprisingly, this view of the human achievement has frequently operated as an integral part of the Social Darwinistic rationale of expansionistic societies. But the concept has never remained confined to the days of Manifest Destiny and the White Man's Burden. Continuing into our own time, it has taken the various forms of controversies involving

brain size, brain weight, grey matter, and cross-cultural differences in "intelligence", as well as uninformed philosophical and psychoanalytic views regarding the "mentality of the primitive". (Tobias 1970: 3-25; Comas 1961; Freud 1918: 3-4; Russell 1945: 15).

In what was probably the greatest reductio ad absurdum of the differential-creativity point of view, the archeologists of Hitlerian Germany announced to the world that their research had demonstrated the superiority of the German people throughout all prehistory. This had been accomplished by extending the chronology of German prehistory an indefinite distance into the past and then viewing all artifactual parallelisms as evidence of uni-directional cultural diffusion out of a single Germanic center. (Clarke 1965: 259-260).

The episode illustrates, in pathological fashion, the significance of the prehistoric record for the understanding of human creativity. At the outset, it should be noted that reconstructing the origin and export of human innovations is a matter of considerable complexity. The distinction between independent invention and diffusion is a classic problem in archeological research, and continues to present difficulties today. Moreover, even if similarities in artifactual repertoires are pronounced enough, and our chronometric dating technique are accurate enough to establish the direction of diffusion, there remains the possibility that the society receiving the innovation accepted it only because its own social organization was sufficiently prepared to receive the change; a change, in other words, which the recipient society itself was on the verge of creating. (White 1949: 169-170).

Such parallelisms in cultural preparedness have happened frequently in recorded history (giving rise to a near simultaneity of hundreds of human inventions) and were probably the case in human prehistory as well.

A reexamination of the matter of Neolithic animal domestication, for example, indicates that animal husbandry diffused rapidly out of the Middle East into Western Europe as a possible result of an increasing symbiosis between animals and humans that had been developing in the latter region since the time of the Upper Paleolithic. The related factors of cultural preparedness and near simultaneity of inventions dilute considerably the claims for the pronounced originality of a few societies. Nor should it be forgotten that changes in social organization and ideology can and do occur without accompanying changes in artifactual materials, and that a diffusion of artifactual materials implies neither the migration of human societies, nor the importation of significant social and ideational transformations. (White 1949: 169-170; Higgs and Jarman 1969: 31-41).

Finally, the view that those societies existing today on a primitive level of technology and with simpler forms of social organization are in some way creatively stultified is again a reflection of a limited understanding of the processes of cultural evolution. In the majority of cases, such societies are found in techno-environments that permit only a limited number of options in the arc of human possibilities. It is not simply the technological behavior, but frequently post-marital residence patterns, economic exchanges, the allocation of jural status, and aspects of ideological or magico-religious systems as well that have been shaped into highly cohesive systems by the selection pressures of the marginal areas of the world. Small-scale changes have long-range effects; alternative choices are severely circumscribed. Lauriston Sharp has described in convincing detail how a change from stone to steel axes brought about the total collapse of an Australian aborigine society. It is not, then, that human creativity is more "naturally" characteristic of certain people,

but rather that the origin, movement, and rate of change of information within and between human societies is continually affected by the natural-selection pressures of the sociocultural-environmental system. Creativity is not a quality that is possessed or not possessed, but is a ubiquitous human potentiality that depends upon the surrounding environmental matrix for the limitations and range of its expression. The human community needs to understand that there is, in Bateson's phrase, a selection of ideas, or more exactly put, an "ecology of mind". (Sharp in Hammond 1964: 84-94; Bock 1969: 208; Harris 1971: 141; Bateson 1972; Pfeiffer 1972: 349)

The ultimate significance, however, of an evolutionary perspective for the understanding of sociocultural achievement lies in its demonstration of the pronounced homogeneity, both biological and cultural, that has characterized the overwhelming proportion of the chronological record of humankind.[2] There is indeed a very special sense in which this aspect of the evolutionary record possesses a kind of tragic irony. Throughout most of the timespan of hominid existence, biological and cultural similarities were conserved by exogamous matings of migratory bands and the similar selection pressures of a hunter-gatherer mode of existence. But the incremental increase in cultural elaboration which made possible our evolutionary survival also enabled us to expand geographically into a vast hetereogeneity of environments: it opened up Western Europe and Asia, then the New World, made possible plant domestication and animal husbandry, and finally the development of cities. The essential irony, then, is that our non-corporeal means of survival has ultimately generated the extensive array of biocultural variations that so often are the bases of contemporary human animosity: the diversity that divides

us is our own creation.

But yet in this record there is hope for the present. Evolution is not a counsel of despair. Embedded in the realization that mythologies of human evolution, like the biosocial variations that they seek to explain, are ultimately cultural creations, leaves open the possibility of culture change. When the ethnic minorities that are struggling for recognition, and in some cases for their lives, can be approached with scientifically-oriented diachronic understanding rather than through the framework of deleterious and exploitative evolutionary mythologies, then a major ideological step will have been taken toward the easing of human relations in the modern world.

The French playwright Eugene Ionesco recalled that as a child he once attended with his mother the opening of a theatre in Paris. Holding the program an arm's length away, he had suddenly asked: "If I look at the words from a long, long distance, will I be able to understand?" The question reverberates down to the present, and bears upon our understanding of our times. Anthropologist E.B. Tylor once said that evolution was the fact that all thinking persons must attempt to come to terms with if they are ever to make sense of human life. Echoing Tylor and Eugene Ionesco, I believe that much of the conflict of the contemporary world derives from the "words that are seen from a distance" --- as well as from our ability to understand.

NOTES

1. The grouping of mythology and history under the rubic of "diachronic understandings" is only intended to suggest that all human societies perceive a meaningful realtion between what we label "successive events". I do not wish to imply that there is any kind of cross-cultural uniformity with regard to concepts of either "time" or "events", and certainly not that there exists a universal cross-cultural correspondance with our own linear, segmented codifications of reality. Also, in regard to the functions of these temporal codifications, I am aware that they can be divisive as well as integrative, but feel nonetheless that these opposing effects can simultaneously exist within the same cultural system. In other words, the same "diachronic understandings" can be both a "charter of reality" as well as a source of conflict within the society, our own Judaeo-Christian codifications being probably the most striking example. (Lee 1959: 105-120, Malefigt 1968: 179-182; David E. Jones, personal communication).

2. "Biocultural homogeneity" is, of course, a relative concept, and is intended to refer to the general similarities in both physical appearance and social organization that were probably more pronounced among human populations during the Pleistocene than at any time since. Undoubtedly, human populations have always differed in various cultural respects from one another, and all anthropologists are additionally aware of the pronounced morphological variations during Australopithecine and Neanderthal times. When Pleistocene and Holocene are viewed in their entireties, however, I believe that the latter is characterized by far greater variations in both the physical characteristics of human populations and the nature of their sociocultural adaptations.

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